131

133

Ötztal Costume.

Beyond this territorial formation lies, in the north-west of the Province, the Außerfern, with intervening gateways—the district of Reutte through which flow the rivers Loch and Loisach, and in the south-east of the province of East Tyrol, the district of Lienz, watered by the Isel and the Drau.

The formation of Tyrol is regular—not rigidly symmetrical, but harmonious. The features which offset one another have both similarity and differences. The Ziller Valley, for example, at first broad and almost devoid of interesting features, rises a bare 300 feet at Mayrhofen. There it splits up into the "Gründe", like the fingers of a hand, and suddenly reveals its whole beauty; only the "thumb" has extended earlier at Zell in the Gerlos. In contrast, the valley of the Ötz rises by the "steps" of Ötz, Umhausen, Längenfeld and Sölden through delightfully contrasting gorges and basins until, after passing Zwieselstein, at Gurgl and Vent, it reaches the highest farmhouse, which lies at a height of over 6000 feet. The Sill Valley is unlike both. Starting from Innsbruck, the capital of the Province, it carries the main railway line and the main road up to a deeply cut pass with glaciers left and right. The Upper and the Lower Inn Valleys are equally important, but as different from one another as night from day, as are the chalk formations from the primary rocks south of the Inn.

●132 The wanderer—in Tyrol one has to wander—comes across sudden changes in scenery as well as sudden changes of weather. North and south contest one against the other. The Föhn (south wind) forces the snow to retreat high up into the mountains in winter—the temperature may rise 70 degrees Fahrenheit in twelve hours—and in August a cold spell may cause a very sharp fall. Mountain and valley intensify the contrasts. He who freezes at midday in the eternal winter

132

A PAGE OF HISTORY

Meinhart the Second (of Görz) who was Meinhart the First of Tyrol, the man who formed the Province into a political unit in the thirteenth century, gave it the name of his castle near Meran, Schloss Tirol, is little remembered today. His wife, Elizabeth, on the other hand, still lives in the memory of the people. The widow of the Emperor Conrad the Fourth and mother of Conradin, she gave Tyrol the impressive background of the Staufer Empire. She set up a permanent memorial to her unhappy son in the Monastery of Stams. Meinhart, through the marriage of his daughter with the son of the Emperor Rudolf I, established the first connection with the House of Hapsburg.

Popular interest concentrates much more on the stirring story of Meinhart's grandchild Margarethe Maultasch ("Pocket-Mouthed Meg"), who drove out her first husband to marry her own cousin. She was excommunicated by the Church on the grounds that this marriage involved a double sin. It was long years before the ban was lifted. She survived her second husband and only son; in 1363 she made over "the land on the Etsch and the Inn Valley with Schloss Tirol and all else appertaining thereto" to Rudolf the Endower. Fourteen gentlemen of Tyrol put their seals to the deed in the name of all inhabitants of the Duchy, of the "clergy and laymen, nobles and commoners, wether living in the towns or in the country". With this impressive voluntary deed Tyrol began its life in the federation of Austrian Provinces. It soon found an opportunity to prove its loyalty.

Friedl with the Empty Pocket, popular despite his outlawry and excommunication, confirmed the freedom of the Province at the Diet of Meran in 1423, when for the first time burghers

of the ice world of the Ötztal may enjoy eternal spring the same evening 9000 feet below amid vines and chestnut trees. The modern mountain railways make the contrast even more unbelievable.

563

THE TYROLESE. You will find among the people of Tyrol as many contrasts as those which characterise its landscape. To Tyrol the Bavarians came from the north and north-east, from the west and north-west the Allemanians, and from the south, Latin races infiltrated. The remnants of an aboriginal population whose source is obscure sought refuge from the invaders among the crags and crannies of the mountains where their descendants are to be found to this day. Throughout the length and breadth of the country you will come across curious names of village and pasture which recall these various races. Tyrol, which resembles Switzerland in this respect, managed to weld these various tribes—and later the people of German, Italian and Ladinian race—together, to live peacefully in a small area. Today these elements have overcome the limitations of nationalism and feel themselves to be above all Tyrolese. Once again the forces making for unity proved stronger than those tending towards separation, and the passes, as the word implies, have become links, not barriers.

184
101
144

In Tyrol, inhabitants, dialect, costume, methods of building houses and of agriculture

SALT FROM HALLSTATT.

Thousands of years before the birth of Christ, the salt deposits in Hallstatt brought settlers to this remote spot and soon gave them comparative prosperity. Mining was also carried on, bronze cast, coarse wool woven and many a beautiful vessel of clay skilfully formed, although without the help of a potter's wheel. In baskets and sacks the salt was brought along byways to the trading roads and there exchanged against Roman goods. When the overlordship of Rome came to an end, Hallstatt fell into oblivion, the barbarian invasions temporarily obliterating its very name.

In 1292 Duke Albrecht I of Austria ordered the salt works of Gosau to be opened. This led to friction with Archbishop Conrad of Salzburg, as salt was also produced in his territories at Hallein. Possibly this prince saw danger to his revenues in the competition. Possibly the new works at Gosau really lay on Salzburg soil. In any case when the news of Albrecht's death became known in 1295, the soldiers of Conrad of Salzburg, accompanied by a mob from Hallein, overran the Kucheltal, destroying the salt-pans and the new trading-centre.

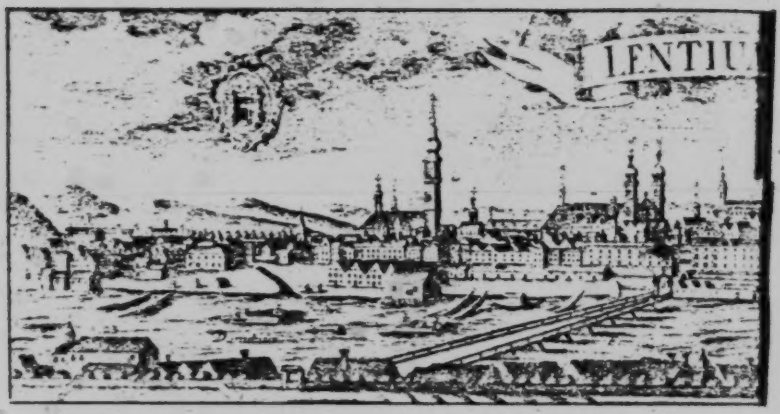
Salt mines in Hallstatt were first mentioned in 1311, as a concern run by the State. A new method of producing the salt had been developed; instead of it being simply hacked off in blocks, it was dissolved in water, and the solution pumped above ground into pans. For a time the salt thus recovered was transported just as it had been 1500 years previously; that is, it was brought in sacks to Lambach and there shipped down the Traun.

Hallstatt's production in 1311 was considerable, amounting to about 4800 tons a year. By 1534 it was already 10,000 tons, rising to 25,000 tons in 1571.

The discovery of the Ischl salt mountain in 1562 caused Hallstatt's out. Circumventing the deep cut valleys, the high roads lead to the hilly uplands. Before long one glimpses the wooded rolling summits with the Alps on their southern horizon. The surrounding hills are covered with dark green forests, against which ploughland, pastures and farms stand out beneath the sunlit clouds. The slender-spired, white-walled churches on the heights might be pilgrims' ships about to set sail towards shores in the heavens. From the depths rises the sound of the rushing waters of the Feldaist, which after flowing placidly through meadow land at Wartberg, has been trapped in a wide and narrow rocky gorge through which it has to storm its way into the open. There its dark sister, the Waldaist, which has its source among deep forests where in remote villages the inhabitants paint religious pictures on glass, flows placidly to join it.

Amid such surroundings lies Kefermarkt, whose gothic church contains a well-known carved altar, a fine example of late mediaeval art. It breathes the spirit of an artist who was at one with the people. St. Wolfgang occupies the central shrine, with St. Peter and St. Christopher on either side. The delicate tracery of the lime-wood carving branches upwards like the tops of trees. Something of the old-world peace that permeates the hill region which the traveller has just left seems to be embodied in the gentle inspired features of the central figure. In the face of the "Holy Ferryman" St. Christopher, one finds traces of the severity of the northern landscape. Any day you can run across people with such impassive faces, with such dour expressions on those inclement uplands of the Upper Mühlviertel, where spring arrives a month later than elsewhere in Austria, and where even in summer the solitary farmhouses are endangered

000



132 by raging storms. Here an early winter may often come to destroy the harvest, the fruit of bitter toil, and sweep away bridges and footpaths so that neighbour is isolated from neighbour.

361 At such times life is easier in the Upper Austrian towns—for instance, in Freistadt, the former frontier fortification north of Kefermarkt. Round the mediaeval town with its wide, turreted square lies a broad moat. On the wall which once defended the citadel whisper ancient lime-trees, casting their shadows over the children who play beneath them.

496 Not far from here runs the line between Linz and Budweis, the first "railway" line constructed on the continent of Europe, which unites the former Crown Lands of Bohemia to Upper Austria. In biedermeier times the citizens of Linz used to make excursions on this railway, travelling far into the country in horse-drawn railway carriages resembling post-coaches. These were in use for 40 years before the horse-drawn was replaced by the steam railway.

133 Up hill, down dale, sometimes in deep valleys, sometimes climbing up to the heights, the Mühlviertel, which has been called, not without reason, the "hunchback"-land, stretches further and further out towards the dim vastness of the Böhmerwald. At the foot of the Dreisesselberg, where Bavaria, Bohemia and Upper Austria meet, rises the broad Mühl from which the district takes its name, its golden-brown waters flowing on to the Prämenstratensian monastery of Schlögl. For many hours one can trace its meanderings through solitary mountain forests, following the sound of the woodsman's axe or the smoke of the charcoal-burners, where the grey wisps 288 float above the lofty crests of the pines. From courtyards and houses come the 248 muffled rhythm of hand-operated spinning wheels. Here flax is grown, spun and bleached,

133 You once stood in May in Wiener Neustadt on the Ungarfeld. There was the rocky wall of the Hohe Wand in the south. The Rosalien range appeared as a light coloured, enticing forest. Eastwards the green pasture-land opened out like a [874] gateway. The two gothic towers of the Theresian Military Academy were an unchanging landmark of the "ever-loyal town".

You first drove over the Semmering in time of peace. Then you were able to enjoy yourself quietly and at leisure. Giants must once have played in this area, using as dice the mountains which begin here, wild and majestic. A man of the determination of Karl Ghega was needed to tame this wilderness. He bent the mountains and the deep gorges to his will. His tunnels and viaducts alternate [496] in carrying the railroad to its highest point. The Semmering railway was the first mountain railway of the world which all others used as a model. All the railways of the Andes in South America learned from it.

[132] The Semmering district, in a pocket of warm air above cold and misty valleys, is Lower Austria's show-piece. People from all the world over come here in search of health and peace. The Viennese regard the Semmering, Rax and Schneeberg as their own estates in the Alps. Towards the east the landscape slopes gradually down to the forested knolls of the hill country. In Mönichkirchen the work of Anton Wildgans reached epic status.

IN THE WACHAU DISTRICT. In the first days of creation there may have been some question as to which was the stronger, land or water. In the Wachau, the river triumphed over the mountains, although it has still to follow a course prescribed by the former, as to where it should narrow, should turn, should form bays and inlets; rocks jut out to spur its flanks, hidden granite builds hurdles over which it is forced to leap. Between Melk and Krems nestle a dozen charming villages whose picture lingers long with the wanderers along the banks and the passengers on the Danube steamers. Weissenkirchen lies in the heart of the Wachau district in a sunny position to the south. Old courtyards, arcades, rounded archways and vinecovered houses call for attention. In the small village of Schwallenbach they will show you the old parish church and the "Devil's Wall". The boatmen of the Danube tell the story of its origin. The Devil's grandmother is said to have scoffed regularly at the columns of pilgrims and the ships of the Crusaders, moving the Archfiend one night to try to block the flow of the Danube by building this [172] stout wall. At Willendorf was found the sandstone figure of a "Venus" which archaeologists admire as a relic of matriarchal, pre-historic times. Spitz, a sleepy little Danube town at the foot of the Jauerling should not be overlooked. Backed by the four-square tower of the Hinterhaus ruins, it is in blossom time a fairy garden of pink and white. Standing out against the mountains behind are multi-coloured forests—pale green larches, rust-brown fir trees and dark pines.